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Policy directives to the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and strengthening the drug programme and the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as its governing body, including administrative, budgetary and strategic management questions

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Twenty-third session
Vienna, 12-16 May 2014
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Strategic management, budgetary and administrative questions: work of the working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2013/246, in which the Council extended the mandate of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 52/13, 54/10, 54/17 and 56/11 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 18/3, 20/1, 20/9 and 22/2. The present note covers the work of the working group between 31 October 2013 and 13 January 2014. The co-chairs presented an oral report on the work of the working group from 31 October up to 10 December 2013 to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its reconvened fifty-sixth session and to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its reconvened twenty-second session; that information is also included in the present report for the sake of completeness. Information on the work of the working group during the period 1 February to 30 September 2013 can be found in document E/CN.7/2013/7/Add.2-E/CN.15/2013/7/Add.2.

* E/CN.7/2014/1.
** E/CN.15/2014/1.

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I. Deliberations

1. From 31 October 2013 to 13 January 2014, the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held one formal and three informal meetings. It continued to consider issues under the items of the agenda as approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2011/258, by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its resolution 52/13 and by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in its resolution 18/3 and in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to those resolutions, as well as with the provisions contained in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 56/11 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 22/2.

2. At the meeting of the working group held on 31 October, the Secretariat provided an update on the implementation of the consolidated budget for the biennium 2012-2013 and the consolidated budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for UNODC, including in relation to the UNODC field presence, its cost structure and programme delivery from field offices. Delegations were informed that special-purpose income was expected to increase in 2012-2013, which showed that donors had confidence in UNODC programme delivery. At the same time, voluntary general purpose contributions had continued to fall. As regards the consolidated budget for 2014-2015, UNODC had reviewed its funding model, costing methodologies and funding options as a result of anticipated exponential growth in the volume and scope of technical assistance and a persistent deterioration of general-purpose income, with a view to introducing full cost recovery. Practical examples of introducing full cost recovery into UNODC field operations were provided. While most speakers agreed that full cost recovery would have a favourable effect on transparency, its implementation needed to be discussed further with Member States to ascertain its impact on field operations and technical assistance. The working group was briefed on the findings of the evaluation of UNODC done by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and on the implementation of its recommendations. The working group also considered a revised draft of the UNODC evaluation policy. The programme performance review for 2012 for the thematic programme on action against corruption was presented by the Secretariat. The working group was furthermore provided with an update of the implementation of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the preparations for the upcoming Conference of the States Parties to that Convention in Panama.

3. At the meeting held on 20 November, there was a question-and-answer session with UNODC senior management on the consolidated budget for the Office for the biennium 2014-2015, covering aspects such as salary costs; the definition of core functions; guidelines on the use of funds according to source; and the anticipated levels of general- and special-purpose contributions. Speakers stressed that transparency, strategic direction, reporting, integrated programming and cost-effectiveness were key for UNODC to remain competitive. Some delegations expressed their support for the full cost recovery funding model, while others underlined the need to re-evaluate existing UNODC programmes in the light of that model, particularly with regard to their efficiency and competitiveness. The

sustainability of some field offices under the full cost recovery model also needed to be reviewed. Several speakers mentioned the importance of introducing results-based management UNODC-wide and stressed the need for the Office to provide donor countries with annual, results-based reports on the use of their contributions. UNODC made a presentation on the Global Programme on Cybercrime, whose purpose was to provide cybercrime-related technical assistance and training, as well as capacity-building, clarifying that the focus was on the provision of technical assistance to Member States, at their request, so that investigators and prosecutors could develop skills in combating cybercrime. Some speakers discussed the mandate of UNODC with respect to cybercrime, the definitions used in the programme document and the absence of an international cybercrime framework. Other speakers expressed their appreciation for the programme and their support for the continued implementation of its capacity-building activity. An update on the regional programme for West Africa for the period 2010-2014 was also presented at the meeting, outlining the results and funding status of its subprogrammes on organized crime, illicit trafficking and terrorism; justice and integrity; and drug prevention and health. Some of the major challenges in the region were methamphetamine production and trafficking, smuggling of migrants, firearms trafficking and maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. Finally, participants were briefed on tools to strengthen evaluation practices in field offices and UNODC programmes.

4. At the meeting held on 10 December, participants were informed of action taken by UNODC to strengthen its programme-level reporting, including, subject to availability of extrabudgetary funding, the preparation of an annual UNODC programme report, which would include global, regional and country data. At the same time, and following a thorough review of budget and funding requirements of the various global, regional and country programmes, a compendium of all UNODC funding requirements would be compiled. Those two documents could form the basis of an annual appeal event. The working group then considered the new regional programme for South-East Asia for the period 2014-2017, which supported the Governments of the region to improve capacity to deal with regional drug and crime challenges through cross-border cooperation, jointly with regional partnership mechanisms and frameworks such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Greater Mekong subregion memorandum of understanding on drug control. The programme would focus on transnational organized crime and illicit trafficking, anti-corruption activities, terrorism prevention, criminal justice, drugs and health, and alternative development. Member States also continued discussing the consolidated budget for the biennium 2014-2015 in preparation for the reconvened sessions of the Commissions, focusing on the full cost recovery model and its implementation in field offices and at headquarters. Some delegations referred to the significant implications the full cost recovery model would have for the implementation of the subprogramme on technical cooperation and field support, as outlined in the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the consolidated budget for the biennium 2014-2015. The working group considered the format and organization of its meetings with a view to improving its effectiveness. Speakers stressed the importance of the working group as a consultative body to facilitate the work of the Commissions in the intersessional period. While some were in favour of institutionalizing the working group as a permanent structure, others stressed its informal nature, as well as the

advisability of not politicizing its debates and of avoiding micromanagement, and were in favour of renewing its mandate periodically, in line with current resolutions.

5. The Executive Director addressed the formal meeting of the working group held on 13 January 2014, focusing on the introduction of a sustainable funding model for UNODC based on full cost recovery. At the meeting, the Secretariat provided an update on the implementation of the UNODC thematic programme on terrorism prevention, noting that the work also increasingly covered preventing terrorism by assisting States in establishing preventive criminal offences. The working group considered the process for the development, approval and revision of global programmes that were administered by UNODC headquarters in Vienna and that responded to challenges requiring a coordinated response at the international and/or interregional levels. Delegations reiterated that the working group remained the appropriate format for discussing such programmes. Members of the Secretariat presented examples of UNODC cooperation with civil society in implementing its programmatic work in the areas of health and HIV/AIDS; drug use prevention, treatment and rehabilitation; sustainable livelihoods; wildlife and forest crime; maritime crime; crime prevention and criminal justice reform; trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants; and the fight against corruption. Participants acknowledged the extensive cooperation between UNODC and civil society organizations, noting that the Office benefited from their knowledge and expertise on the ground. The chiefs of several UNODC branches and sections made presentations on the implementation status and funding situation of a number of resolutions adopted by the two Commissions in 2012 and 2013, in areas where UNODC had been receiving a large number of mandates, such as those relating to emerging forms of crime; standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice; drug prevention and treatment; and research. While it was stressed that the adoption of resolutions was very valuable in reinforcing or introducing mandates, it was also explained that their implementation by UNODC was often hampered by the lack of extrabudgetary funds made available to the Office. Participants were informed of the involvement of the Office in the United Nations system's work on the post-2015 development agenda, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, rule of law and governance, in relation to issues under UNODC mandates.

II. Organizational and administrative matters

6. Under the guidance of the co-chairs, Reza Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Ignacio Baylina Ruiz (Spain), the working group held three informal meetings during the reporting period, on 31 October, 20 November and on 10 December 2013. Another informal meeting was scheduled for 12 February 2014. A formal meeting was held on 13 January 2014.

7. The Secretariat continued to provide documents and information to the working group by electronic means and in hard copy, including through a public web page (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/wg-governance-finance-2.html) set up and maintained by the Secretariat for the use of the working group on the website of UNODC, and a secure web page to provide Member States with access to information of interest.

III. Action by the Commissions

8. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, at its reconvened fifty-sixth session, and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, at its reconvened twenty-second session, elected Reza Najafi, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Ignacio Baylina Ruiz, Spain, co-chairs of the working group, in accordance with the procedure set out in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/13 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 18/3.